But Paul Gauguin came to Punaauia to absorb and to reproduce the spirit of primitive art, and ' the gods were dead' or dying when he came. The truly native song and dance and decoration had ceased or was ceasing to be. It had been, in the old days, spontaneous, instinctive, natural. There had been about it a primitive inspiration. Child of resplendent colour, of dominant nature, of rich imagination, the Polynesian had been that supreme living art that Gauguin's soul sought and that he would give his life to represent. But it was vanishing like a morning mist before the artificialities of the Law and the Prophets —before the French Republic and the Christian Church. The savage was bludgeoned from it, the beauty prostituted, the imagination laughed out of court. Furiously, desperately, Paul Gauguin fought here against the irresistible approach of these old

enemies of untrammelled art. His fury betrayed him into follies, his despair into bitter words. All that was in vain, as it must be in vain. There is no return. It is for the artist to convert the new into more lovely channels, not to attempt to dam it and reassert the old, for the new has in it more of material power and knowledge and these are the